

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Canceled)

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 11, further comprising:

analysis means for analyzing information about the trouble in the printer product; and
search means for searching for ~~an~~ the operation for resolving the trouble in the printer product on the basis of the result of the analysis.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 2, wherein analysis by said analysis means is performed on the side of a user using the printer product.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising
notice means for sending, to said customer apparatus, a notice of a cost or a time required for the operation.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising:
management means for managing a guarantee period of the printer product,
wherein said cost depends on the managed guarantee period.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 2, further comprising:
management means for managing information about specifications of the printer product,
wherein analysis by said analysis means depends on the managed information about the

specifications.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim 11, further comprising:

storage means for storing contents of an operation actually performed to resolve the trouble in the printer ~~product~~ or results of the operation.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Canceled)

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A trouble management system comprising:

first receiving means for receiving, through a network, from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information of a trouble occurring in the printer;

~~first~~ determining means for determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of the trouble information received by said first receiving means;

~~second determining means for determining whether each of the customer apparatus and the printer has automatic diagnosis functions;~~

first transmitting means for transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received by said first receiving means, to said customer apparatus, if said ~~first~~ determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary ~~and if said second determining means determines that none of the customer apparatus and the printer have the automatic diagnosis functions;~~

second receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which is input to said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted by

said first transmitting means; and

diagnosing means for diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer, in accordance with the response received by said second receiving means; and

second transmitting means for selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis by said diagnosing means.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling a trouble management system, comprising:

a first receiving step of receiving, ~~through a network~~, from a customer apparatus connected to a printer through a network, trouble information for trouble occurring in of the printer;

a first determining step of determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of the trouble information received in said first receiving step;

~~a second determining step of determining whether each of the customer apparatus and the printer has automatic diagnosis functions;~~

a first transmitting step of transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received in said first receiving step, to said customer apparatus, if said first determining step determines that the inquiry is necessary and if said ~~second determining step determines that none of the customer apparatus and the printer have the automatic diagnosis functions;~~

a second receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which

is input at said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted in said first transmitting step; and

a diagnosing step of diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer, in accordance with the response received in said second receiving step; and

a second transmitting step of selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis in said diagnosing step.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for executing a process of controlling a trouble management system, the program storing:

a first receiving step of receiving, ~~through a network~~, from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, through a network, trouble information for a trouble occurring in of the printer;

a first determining step of determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of the trouble information received in said first receiving step;

~~a second determining step of determining whether each of the customer apparatus and the printer has automatic diagnosis functions;~~

a first transmitting step of transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received in said first receiving step to said customer apparatus, if said first determining step determines that the inquiry is necessary and if said second determining step determines that none of the customer apparatus and the

~~printer have the automatic diagnosis functions;~~

a second receiving step of receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which is input at said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted in said first transmitting step; and

a diagnosing step of diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer, in accordance with the response received in said second receiving step

a second transmitting step of selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis in said diagnosing step.

Claim 14. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 11, further comprising:

diagnosis possibility determining means for determining whether or not a diagnosis is possible;

additional determination means for determining whether or not a further inquiry is necessary, if the diagnosis possibility determining means determines that the diagnosis is not possible; and

additional transmission means for transmitting a further inquiry item to the customer apparatus, if the additional determination means determines that the further inquiry is necessary.